

Welcome to the Tuesday Tree Huggin' Tip!



Kermit the Frog might think it's only natural to be green during the holiday season, and maybe you can too by making a couple of easy changes to reduce spending and waste. For many people the holidays signify stress and over-spending. This year you can take a couple of easy steps to enjoy the holidays more and reduce the impact on our environment. Between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, 5 million extra tons of trash are produced in the U.S., not to mention the extra energy used during this period. Below are some simple ideas on how to help you to remain green during the holidays.

Tip 6: Go Green for the Holidays!

Gifts Ideas:

- Purchase gifts that are consumed like food, beverages, mixes, sweets.
- Purchase recyclable gifts like books and magazine subscriptions.
- Purchase consumable gifts like candles, natural body creams or soaps.
- Purchase gift certificates to the person's favorite restaurant, book store or clothing store. You are giving twice with a certificate. Once when the person receives the certificate and again when they use it.
- Give an "experience" like a massage, tickets to the theatre or music event, day at the spa, movie tickets, etc. This works for kids too. Kids love going to the movies or a music event. You could also share this experience and go with the person.

- Purchase a membership to an environmental organization that helps the environment year round.
- Get together instead of giving gifts. The holidays are a great time to spend time with friends and relatives. Instead of exchanging gifts, spend some quality time together.

Wrapping Ideas:

- Buy recycled gift wrap.
- Make your own gift bags and reuse them.
- Wrap gifts with brown grocery bags and decorate them. This is a great family activity. Kids love drawing, stamping, coloring, etc on the packages. Other materials could be used to wrap the gifts too – i.e. comics, newspaper, etc.
- Reuse ribbons and bows.
- Use your holiday cards from the previous year as gift tags for the current year. Cut portions of the cards out, hole punch and add ribbon. This could be a family activity.

Holiday Cards

- Purchase cards on recycled paper only.
- Purchase cards with a purpose. Most charities sell holiday cards where part of the proceeds goes directly to the charity.
- Make your own cards. Again this could be a great family activity – get the kids involved.
- Send electronic cards to as many family and friends as possible. If Americans sent just one out of every ten holiday cards electronically, it would save over 30,000 trees.

Decorations

- Purchase your Christmas tree from a vendor that uses sustainable forest practices. Or buy a potted tree and plant it after the season.
- Go artificial. It can be used year after year, doesn't leave a huge pile of needles on your carpet and it help protect our forests.
- If you need to purchase new decorations for the tree this year, use biodegradable decorations like cranberries and popcorn.
- Use compact fluorescent/ LED light bulbs. Or use small bulbs on outside lights. Smaller bulbs equal lower wattage which consumes less energy and gives off less heat, making the lights safer. Also purchase light strands that are wired in parallel which have separate circuitry. With separate circuitry if one bulb blows the other bulbs will continue to shine.
- Use a timer on your outdoor and indoor lights.

The holidays are a great time of year. Most people are in such a mad rush to get things done, buy gifts and entertain that they don't take the time to enjoy the moments with friends and family. The holidays are meant to be enjoyed and with some thoughtful changes, you can create memories with your family and be a more environmental-friendly consumer. Being green isn't difficult during this holiday season. A couple of

simple changes can help you reduce stress, create lasting family memories and protect our natural resources.^[1]

Yours in crunchiness,

Angelique

Angelique Wheelock
Greening Program Coordinator
The Donaldson Group
15245 Shady Grove Road, Suite 160
Rockville, MD 20850
awheelock@thedonaldsongroup.com
<http://www.thedonaldsongroup.com>
Phone 301-251-8980, ext. 117
Fax 301-251-8940

1 Information from http://www.cleanwisconsin.org/publications/green_holiday_tips.html ,
accessed 11-27-07

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